

A 2012-84
RECEIVED

2012 JAN -4 A 10: 45
P.O. Box 26
301 S. Spearman
Mount Union, IA 52644
12/26/2011
POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

U.S. Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

To Whom it may concern:

In response to your request for arguments to support my appeal of the closure of the Mount Union, Iowa post office:

The problem with closing the Mount Union post office to save money is that you are not addressing the real problems. The real problems are the amount you are paying present and past employees, and the loss of first class mail volume. Also, with the loss of first class volume, you really don't need to inconvenience customers, as closing post offices will cost you more business to competitors, such as Fedex and UPS.

I have heard that the postmaster at a small town not from Mount Union is making \$80,000 per year. That may be appropriate for a large city post office, such as Cedar Rapids or Des Moines, but for a town of less than 500 people, I think \$35,000 would be more appropriate. Also, you have to deal with more than just payroll; I hear you are paying out a lot of money in pensions for retired postal workers. I am a pharmacist and have been for 31 years, and my retirement is self funded. I plan to work quite a few more years, as I wouldn't be able to make it on what I have saved so far. Your wages and retirement benefits need to be renegotiated.

As for the loss of first class volume, I have a couple of ideas. You could drop the Saturday delivery to start, and maybe even Wednesday, leaving four days per week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. If you don't cut back on delivery days, you might try drumming up more business. Instead of charging 44 cents for a first class letter, you could install a system where I could email my letter for a recipient to the postal service and have it delivered anywhere in the country the next day for 25 cents, printing it at the local post office and delivering locally, eliminating the cross country trip for a piece of paper. In today's world, I can usually find someone's mailing address, but the phone number or email address often are not available. Might also work for certified mail, and would be quick. Just an idea, but it might help your cash flow problem in the long run.

If our post office closes, mailing and receiving packages could be a problem. I really don't want a package sitting in my mailbox all day while I am at work. UPS will put it on my back porch. You really will lose a fair amount of business if you close our local post office, as people will send more packages via UPS and Fedex, and you need more business, not less.

One last item is the amount you will actually save by closing the Mount Union post office. The savings were calculated based on the wages of a postmaster. We have not had an actual postmaster since 2007. The savings will be much less than the approximately \$47,000 estimate; I would be surprised if you would even save \$10,000 per year, and you could lose that much in lost package revenue. You need to come up with an extra five billion dollars a year. Closing our post office, and even with the other closings you have proposed, would be like putting a Bandaid on a bullet wound, or like trying to drain the Mississippi River with a teaspoon. It really won't have much of an effect. You need to keep and even expand your business base, and you definitely need to think outside the box. We

need a postal service and you need to take bold steps. If you need some laws changed, I would be glad to write my congressman and senators on your behalf.

Seriously, even if you do close our post office, you will still need to make some really big changes to the postal system. Please take my suggestions into consideration.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ben B. Johnson", written in dark ink.

Ben B. Johnson

To Whom it may concern:

Enclosed, please find a copy of your cover letter to me and my original appeal letter, and my response to your request for supportive arguments. This should address the points you folks mentioned in your informational letter regarding closures and appeals. Thank you.



Ben Johnson



U.S. POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Office of the Secretary

December 15, 2011

Ben B. Johnson
P.O. Box 26
301 S. Spearman
Mount Union, IA 52644

Re: Appeal of the Postal Service's Determination to Discontinue the Mount Union
Post Office, Mount Union, Iowa

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The Postal Regulatory Commission received your appeal regarding the Postal Service's determination to discontinue the Mount Union post office in Mount Union, Iowa. Your appeal has been assigned Docket No. A2012-84.

A copy of Commission Form 61 is enclosed. You may complete Form 61 or file a brief to provide the Commission with arguments to support your appeal. See 39 CFR 3001.115. The deadline for submission of your arguments is January 3, 2012.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shoshana M. Grove".

Shoshana M. Grove
Secretary

Enclosure

P.O. Box26
301 S. Spearman
Mount Union, IA 52644
November 16, 2001

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Ave NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

To Whom it may concern:

A determination has been made by the U.S. Postal Service to close our local post office here in Mount Union, Iowa. I am served by the Mount Union post office and am filing this appeal.

The U.S. Postal Service needs to make some big changes to keep running, as I heard on the news that they have lost five billion dollars this last year. If the company that I work for had done that, I would have been laid off within a month and they would have made some drastic changes, and I realize that you folks need to make some changes. I empathize with you and therefore have some suggestions to help your bottom line.

The world has changed a lot in the last generation, and the correspondence that use to be carried by the postal service is now mostly carried via telephone or the internet, so your volume of first class letters has declined significantly. Although we are a small community, many of your patrons frequent the post office here in Mount Union, and the convenience of being able to buy stamps or mail parcels is greatly appreciated. Many folks here in town use Ebay and receive packages via the post office. Having a package sit in a hot outdoor mailbox during the summer could damage merchandise. If we lose a shipment of vitamins due to the heat, for the next shipment, we will specify UPS or Fedex, and you will lose that business. I know the argument is that having the mail sent to a mailbox will serve the purpose same as the local post office, but if it really was as good as having a local office, it would have been set up that way from the beginning. Also, the estimated annual savings of \$40,000 was based on the wages of a postmaster. We haven't had a postmaster since 2007, we have only had fill in people who make less money. Your savings will be less than \$40,000, and you probably will lose more business if the post office closes.

What to do? You really do need to save a lot of money to keep going, and we do need a postal service. Here is my suggestion: reduce days of delivery. Four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday would be sufficient. Possibly three days a week would be good, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I think the four day work week might fly; people who now work five days a week would work four, but keep their health insurance just like before. Employees will bring a little less home each payday, but get a bigger refund on their taxes. If someone takes a vacation, you will pay less overtime to cover the schedule, as someone will want to pick up the fifth day for straight wages. The bills that come now on Wednesday can wait til Thursday, as can my shipment of vitamins from Swanson Vitamins. Yes, it will take an act of congress, but I'll write to my congressman and senators on your behalf, and I bet a lot of other people would too.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ben B. Johnson